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DEATH ROW

'We're No Different Than the Main Line'

Editor's Note: In June a group from the San Quentin News interviewed six inmates on San Quentin's Condemned Row, better known as Death Row. This is the second article on the results of that interview. For the interview the condemned inmates were locked in a steel enclosure that doubles as the Death Row Catholic Chapel. Conducting the interview from the walkway outside the enclosure were newspaper staffers Michael R. Harris, Julian Glenn Padgett, Arnulfo Garcia and David Marsh, plus adviser John C. Eagan.

One question posed: What would you like to tell the general public about being here?

Samuel L. Capers, on the Row for four years, said, "We are no different from other captives on the Main Line. Media only talks about the cases involving children and women. Not everybody falls into that category on the

Row. We are human beings and not animals."

Steven Catlin, on Death Row for 20-plus years, commented, "It is no picnic."

Dexter Williams, who arrived there in 1996, said, "If you can get beyond the politics and the drama of the media, 80 percent of the people here aren't who you think they are."

Bob Williams, who arrived 14 years ago at age 20, said, "I have somehow managed to turn this place into my own personal monastery of sorts. I consider myself to have grown up here, become a man here, and truly found myself here, and I have found God in a deeply personal, mystical, and very profound way here ... I have somehow managed to become a better person than I was when I got arrested at age 18."

See *Death* on Page 5

R.E.A.L Choices Group Making an Impact

By **ARNULFO GARCIA**
Staff Writer

JUAN HAINES
Journalism Guild Writers

A group of 26 at-risk boys who turned their lives around, thanks to counselors and San Quentin inmates, graduated in June from a program called R.E.A.L. (Reaching Expanding Adolescent Lives) Choices.

The Oakland youngsters, aged 13 to 17, were "making a difference, one choice at a time," according to Vernell Crittendon Jr., a retired San Quentin Lieutenant and former Public Information Officer for the prison.

"We believe in education...education is really going to open up your dreams to becoming a reality," Crittendon added.

R.E.A.L. Choices began in 2001. The concept was adopted by convicts at San Quentin State

Prison with a desire to serve the local community's problem of rising youth violence.

The program provides workshops on effective communication, sexually transmitted diseases, drug awareness/prevention and gang awareness.

Laura Moran, chief service officer at Oakland Unified School District, attended the graduation. Moran's association with R.E.A.L. Choices began last year with a desire to find innovative methods in the development of community leadership, and youth-orientated programs that avert the policy of criminalization of youthful behavior.

Vincent Cullen, San Quentin Acting Warden, told the graduates, "If you do come to state prison, you're not guaranteed to come to San Quentin. There are

See *Seeking* on Page 4

Parole's Ups and Downs

By **DAVID MARSH**
Contributing Writer

Parole is in transition. The folks in Sacramento would be the first ones to tell you this in case you didn't read it in the newspapers. My parole agent(s) have been quick to point this out to me. But you'll experience the confusion firsthand with your first visit or two to the local parole office.

Me, I paroled on June 11 and I'm currently working with my third agent. Yes, three in two months! I haven't moved or changed my address once. I'm still in the same place. And No. 3 tells me not to get too comfortable because I'll quite soon be meeting No. 4. Honest! Now that's a sure recipe for confusion.

When you hit the streets upon paroling, a job will be primary

Annenberg Foundation Impressed by San Quentin

JULIAN GLENN PADGETT
Managing Editor

MICHAEL R. HARRIS
Editor-in-Chief

ARNULFO T. GARCIA
Staff Writer

Charles Annenberg Weingarten of the celebrated Annenberg Foundation visited San Quentin and was moved to say he was pleasantly surprised to find so many inmates who have linked their own rehabilitation to self-help programs and education.

The afternoon sun was shining on July 1 when Weingarten, the creator of Explorer.org, was escorted down to the education department by Public Information Officer Lt. Sam Robinson. Walking with Lt. Robinson also was a small group of foundation associates, Tom Pollack of Explorer.org, and Ben Fuller and Lili Polastri from Link TV. Also



Photo: Annenberg Foundation

Charles Annenberg Weingarten

present were some familiar faces of San Quentin: Jody Lewen of Patten University Project and documentary filmmaker Tamara Perkins.

The Annenberg Foundation was endowed in 1989 with \$1.2 billion by Charles's grandfather,

the late Walter H. Annenberg, former U.S. ambassador and president of Triangle Publications. Triangle included nationwide TV and radio stations, Seventeen magazine, and TV Guide. The ambassador also founded the Annenberg Schools of Communication at both the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and the University of Southern California in 1971. Also, in 1983 the Washington Program in Communication Policy was established.

Once Charles Weingarten's group arrived at San Quentin, they were led to the media room inside the education building where they were shown TV trailers, Public Service Announcements and movie shorts. All of these were produced, directed, shot and edited by inmates in the media department. Troy Wil-

See *Weingarten's* on Page 4



Photo: S.Q. News File Photos

Some of the Education staff members who spearhead Robert E. Burton School

The Unsung Heroes of Education

In the background of numerous San Quentin inmate success stories is the Robert E. Burton School of Education. Follow-

ing last month's graduation ceremony, master of ceremonies and Vice Principal Frank Kellum discussed his belief in education, transcendence and human development.

"I was drawn here to San Quentin because a lot of my students were coming here not just as inmates," Kellum said, "Some of my ex-students were also coming in here as staff."

After graduating from Balboa High School in San Francisco he went onto obtain an AA degree at City College of San Francisco. Later Kellum turned his thirst for knowledge into two Master's degrees, one in education and the

other in Ethnic studies in a multi-ethnic society.

Kellum began his teaching career 40 years ago in private and public schools in and around the Oakland and San Francisco area. In the 90's he became an instructor at San Quentin.

In his first year at this facility Kellum taught both of the pre-release classes, where he stressed to his students the potency of visualization.

However, it was after he read the book "Creative Visualization" in the 80's by Shakti Gawain that Kellum decided to teach his new class a thing or two on visualization.

See *Unsung* on Page 4

The Impact of Doing Time

By **ARNULFO GARCIA**
Staff Writer
JUAN HAINES
Journalism Guild Writer

Part 2 of 2

Prisoners who struggle with their emotions and behavior create obscure as well as camouflaging personas. They risk alienation from others and are subject to chronic emotional flatness and debilitating social interaction finding that they have created a permanent and unbridgeable distance between themselves and other people.

These are some of the conclusions of Craig Haney, a professor at University of California, Santa Cruz, and an renowned expert on the effects of incarceration. Some of Haney’s other findings:

Some prisoners find safety in social invisibility by becoming as inconspicuous and unobtrusively disconnected from others as possible. In extreme cases, especially when combined with prisoner apathy and loss of the capacity to initiate behavior on one’s own, the pattern closely resembles that of clinical depression. Long-term prisoners are particularly vulnerable to this form of psychological adaptation.

In addition to obeying the formal rules of the institution, there are also informal rules and norms that are part of the unwritten institutional and prisoner culture code that must be followed.

In many institutions, the lack of meaningful programs has deprived most inmates of pro-social or positive activities in

which to engage while incarcerated. Prisoners are denied basic privacy rights and lose control over mundane aspects of their existence that most citizens take for granted.

They are housed in extremely cramped spaces (a 60 square foot cell is roughly the size of a king-sized bed), have little or no control over who they share that space with and the intimate contact it requires. Some feel they are treated like infants, and the degraded conditions under which they live are a repeated reminder of a compromised social status and stigmatized social role as prisoners. A diminished sense of self-worth and personal value may result. For some prisoners, incarceration is so stark and psychologically painful that it represents a form of traumatic stress severe enough to produce post-traumatic stress reactions once released.

The fact that a high percentage of persons presently incarcerated have experienced childhood trauma means, among other things, that the harsh punitive and uncaring nature of prison life may represent a kind of “re-traumatization” experience for many.

Mental illness and developmental disability represent the largest number of disabilities among prisoners. Upwards of 20 percent of the current prisoner population nationally suffers from either some sort of significant mental or psychological disorder or developmental disability, Haney says, yet both groups are too often left to their own devices to somehow survive in prison and leave without having had any of their unique needs addressed.

Supermax facilities are where prisoners are kept under conditions of unprecedented levels of social deprivation for long periods of time. This kind of confinement creates its own set of psychological pressures that, in some instances, disable prisoners for re-integration into the outside world.

Haney’s basic propositions: prisons have become difficult places to adjust and survive over the last several decades; adaptation to prisons exact psychological costs to prisoners; some prisoners are more vulnerable to the ill effects of imprisonment than others; the psychological cost and ill effects of imprisonment can severely impede post-prison adjustment; and multiple things should be done, in and out of prison, to minimize these impediments.

The abandonment of rehabilitation, Haney believes, has resulted in an erosion of modestly protective norms against cruelty toward prisoners.

Pot Vote Goes on The Ballot

By **MICHEAL COOKE**
Journalism Guild Writer

Californians will vote in November on whether to legalize marijuana, and there is clear disagreement on potential impacts of Proposition 19.

A new study by the state’s Legislative Analyst’s Office found legalizing marijuana could give a revenue boost to local governments, but estimating how much is difficult because of many unknown factors.

MANY UNCERTAINTIES

The report concludes that conflicts between federal and state laws, how cities and counties will tax and regulate pot, and the potential for more drug abusers will affect how much money would come from legalizing marijuana.

“We do try to stress that there are a lot of uncertainties,” said Paul Golaszewski, who prepared the study. “At the same time, we’re trying to be helpful to voters. If this did occur, here’s what you might expect.”

The report analyzing Proposition 19 was published July 20 as part of the voter guide issued by the Secretary of State’s Office.

Proposition 19 supporters say legalization would be a windfall for local and state treasuries, but critics argue crime and abuse would increase. They also question if there would be any positive economic effects.

The report says the ballot initiative could result in savings of several tens of millions of dollars annually to local and state governments by reducing the

Veterans Affairs

In honor of Veterans Day, the Condemned Keepers motorcycle club, in association with the S.Q. Veterans Group is proud to present the 3rd Annual Run to the Pen, tentatively scheduled for September 11, 2010.

number of pot offenders in state prisons and county jails. It also says it would reduce the amount of money spent prosecuting marijuana-related offenses.

However, any monetary savings would likely be used on other prosecutions, or retaining offenders who would have been released early because of overcrowding.

Proposition 19 would allow those 21 and older to possess up to one ounce of pot. Residents could also grow their own crop in gardens measuring 25 square feet.

PUBLIC USE BANNED

User would be banned from public use or smoking it while minors are present. It would make it illegal to possess pot on school property or drive while under its influence.

The report says local governments would decide whether to permit and tax sales. Researchers also concluded the price of marijuana would likely decrease if the plant is made legal, making it difficult to know how much of a boon to expect.

The report concluded, however, that if a commercial pot industry is developed, the state would eventually collect hundreds of millions of dollars in additional cash.

New Addition to the Roster Of Faiths at San Quentin

By **COLE BIENEK**
Journalism Guild Writer

The religious program at San Quentin has expanded its borders to include a small but dedicated group of Wicca practitioners. The group, or “coven” as they are known, meets Saturday mornings in the old MAC office in the chapel plaza.

Two Britons revived Wicca. Gerald Gardner, in September 1939, after having heard the word during an initiatory service. Gardner, “The father of modern Wicca,” founded one of the two main streams of the religion, known as “Gardnerian” Wicca. Alex Sanders developed the second denomination, termed “Alexandrian,” in the 1960’s.

Certain practices and beliefs are commonly held among all Wicca practitioners. Of primary import is the code of ethics entitled the “Wiccan Rede.” The origins of the code are somewhat in question, but adherence is required by nearly all Wicca sects. Taken in its simplified form, the Wiccan Rede simply states, “As ye harm none, do what ye will.”

Wiccans recognize and emphasize gender polarity, as seen in their “Sabbat” (Sabbath) rituals that focus upon the relationship between the Wiccan Goddess and God. Basic Wicca cosmology closely relates to the beliefs of animism, where all natural things are believed to have a spirit. Wiccans hold ceremonies for the four main seasonal cycles: Summer and Winter Solstices, and the Fall and Spring Equinoxes. Other practices include rites to honor the lunar cycles, and initiatory rituals marking adherents’ levels of development, usually denoted by ranks or degrees.

Another belief common to Wiccans is the Law of Threefold Return. Similar to the principle of Karma, Wiccans hold that whatever they do will return three times.

Modern Wiccans are found on every continent, with the highest percentages located in North America and Europe.

For more information on Wiccan practice, or to sign up to attend services, contact Jimmy Snider in 2N-24.

S.Q. Inmate Murder The First Since 1997

By **JULIAN GLENN**
PADGETT
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Edward John Schaefer, a 44-year-old Novato resident and serial drunk driver, was stabbed and killed inside San Quentin’s reception center, the first killing of an inmate by another in San Quentin in 13 years.

Schaefer was stabbed in the neck and chest in a prison fight at approximately 10:35 a.m. on July 16, three days after arriving here. He was pronounced dead at Marin General Hospital that evening.

24 YEARS TO LIFE

On July 13 Judge Terrence Boren of Marin County Superior Court sentenced Schaefer to 24 years to life for second degree murder and gross vehicular manslaughter of Melody Osheroﬀ, a nine-year-old Novato girl in May 2009. He was also found guilty of severely wounding the young girl’s father, Aaron Osheroﬀ.

As Melody and her father traveled through a crosswalk on San Marin Drive at San Carlos Way in Novato, Schaefer hit them both while speeding on his motorcycle between a car that had stopped for the young family and another parked vehicle. The family members were hit at more than 60 miles per hour, said prosecutor Geoff Iida.

Over the years Schaefer had amassed eight previous convictions for driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. In California an 0.08 percent blood alcohol level constitutes drunk driving. Schaefer’s blood alcohol level was reported by authorities to be 0.16, twice the legal limit of 0.08 percent.

San Quentin inmate Frank Souza of San Jose, 31, is suspected of stabbing Schaefer with a weapon crafted from bed parts. These facts are currently under investigation, according to Lt. Sam Robinson, San Quentin’s Public Information Officer.

Prison authorities said the weapon utilized is one known as a “bone crusher,” a prison-manufactured metal spear bigger than an average prison weapon. Terry Thornton, a spokeswoman for the state prisons department, said, “They’re meant to do a great deal of damage.”

Suspect Souza was convicted in Santa Clara County Superior Court of murder in the first degree for the strangling and beating to death of John Carl Riggins, 59, a homeless man. Riggins died in an alley near Lincoln Avenue in San Jose in August of 2007. Authorities said Souza and Riggins had gotten into an altercation after Souza stole a mountain bike from Riggins.

Lt. Robinson said Souza arrived at San Quentin in January 2010 to begin his sentence of 60 years to life. Souza had been in prison on three prior occasions for grand theft, receiving stolen property and threatening a prosecution witness with force and violence.

‘WE FORGIVE THEM’

Schaefer, no neophyte to the Department of Corrections, had served a four-year state prison sentence for corporal injury to a spouse. He also served county jail time of six months or less in Marin County Jail for prior DUI convictions.

“They got their wish, but we forgive them,” said Lesley Bonilla, Schaefer’s sister. “We are Christians and we forgive everyone involved in this.”

Prior to Schaefer’s death, San Quentin’s last fatal prison killing of an inmate by another inmate was in 1997, officials said. The victim of that killing was Jimmy Palma. He was murdered by members of his own gang after being found guilty of killing a mother, her two children and two other innocent people in a gang strike in Los Angeles.

CDCR in the Dark on Operations

By **ARNULFO GARCIA**
Staff Writer

JUAN HAINES
Journalism Guild Writer

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) fails to track, maintain and use data that would allow effective monitoring and management of its operations, even though expenditures increased by 32 percent to \$10 billion over the last three years.

This is one of several surprising facts unearthed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in an audit requested by State Auditor Elaine M. Howle. Other findings:

- Custody staff costs included \$431 million in overtime during fiscal year 2007-08.
- The Three Strikes law accounted for nearly 25 percent of the prisoner population, costing the State \$19.2 billion for the additional time these prisoners will serve.

CAN'T TRACK CLASSES VS. RECIDIVISM

- A total of \$208 million was spent on academic and vocational programs, but due to inadequate tracking, CDCR is unable to determine the programs' success.
- CDCR is unable to quantify the number of inmates who complete programs or demonstrate improvement in reading scores. CDCR cannot track the relationship between recidivism rates and enrollment in its education programs.
- CDCR cannot determine how long inmates are on waiting lists for programming, whether they parole

before assigned to programs, whether they are properly assigned or how long they are in programs.

Asked why CDCR does not maintain individual prisoner data, superintendent of the Office of Correctional Education Glenn Brooking said there is not sufficient computerized infrastructure among the institutions.

The auditors attempted to determine how many teachers, instructors and custody staff is necessary for prisoner participation in educational, vocational and other rehabilitation programs, but was informed that CDCR does not have a staffing plan based on educational and vocational prisoner needs. CDCR conceded that even if it had a staffing plan based on prisoner needs, it would be unable to fill teacher and instructor vacancies due to a lack of classroom space and the current budget crisis.

This failure to track this data prevents CDCR from determining whether it is in compliance with laws that require literacy programs to be available to at least 60 percent of eligible prisoners.

To address these shortcomings, CDCR indicated that a new data tracking system should be available by 2011.

CDCR officials said they were planning to develop a budget change proposal to address this issue, but efforts were delayed due to the need to make at least \$250 million in reductions to educational, vocational and other rehabilitation programs.

The chief deputy secretary, Elizabeth Siggins, said that after determining the most effective and efficient way to implement these reductions, CDCR plans to continue pursuing a comprehensive budget proposal to link long-term

staffing packages to prisoner need, evidence-based principles and available space.

However, because CDCR does not sufficiently track prisoner data, any staffing plan must be composed without data indicating what resources are needed. CDCR reported that in February 2009, 68,000 of 133,000 inmates tested scored below ninth-grade reading level. Yet CDCR cannot ensure that the prisoners enrolled in literacy programs are the ones in need of such programs.

According to the Audit Report, CDCR's policy regarding education programs is outdated and does not align with state laws regarding prisoner literacy.

FAILURE TO UPDATE ITS POLICIES

Because of CDCR's failure to update its policies regarding adult education programs since 1993, staff may not be clear on the relevant requirements that should be met.

RECOMMENDATIONS by Elaine Howle:

1. To ensure addressing program needs of prisoners in the most cost-effective manners, CDCR should develop a staffing plan that allocates teacher and instructor positions at each institution based on the program needs of its prisoners.
2. To ensure whether compliance with state law and measurement of the efficacy of its programs in reducing recidivism is met, CDCR should track, maintain and use historical program assignment and waiting list data by prisoners.
3. To ensure staff is aware of relevant requirements related to prisoner literacy, CDCR should continue its efforts to update its adult education program policies.

53,000 More Prison Beds

By **MICHEAL COOKE**
Journalism Guild Writer

Despite California's budget crisis, the state is taking steps to improve its prison and parole system.

Three new facilities are under construction aimed at relieving overcrowding.

The driving forces are AB 900 (2007) and AB 552 (2010). Also impacting prison conditions is a federal court order.

'CONCRETE PROGRESS'

AB 900, the Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007, is a multi-phase, multi-billion-dollar prison construction bill that was passed to add an additional 53,000 prison beds to the overcrowded, budget-busting prison system.

The Sentencing and Justice Reform Advocacy (SJRA) newsletter, "Advocate," reported in June that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has "made concrete progress in its effort to implement new construction and renovation projects."

AB 900 authorizes \$7.7 billion (\$7.3 in bonds and \$350 million from the state's general fund) to fund the state prison and local jail beds to relieve severe overcrowding, improve medical conditions

and relieve the threat of federal court intervention.

In June the state's Public Works Board (PWB) approved proceeding with three infill projects—the California Health Care Facility, the Dewitt Nelson Correctional Facility in Stockton, and the Estrella Correctional Facility in Paso Robles.

Action to date includes:

June 15: CDCR broke ground on a 64-bed intermediate care mental health facility at California Medical Facility in Vacaville. The project will provide new construction, including housing, treatment, support, and administrative services for state inmates at an estimated cost of \$33.7 million,

June 16: The California Pooled Money Investment Board approved three loans totaling approximately \$63.4 million to fund preliminary plans and partial working drawings for the California Health Care Facility (Stockton), the Dewitt Nelson Correctional Facility (Stockton), and the Estrella Correctional Facility (Paso Robles).

The California Health Care Facility Stockton is the first AB 900 design-build project. The proposed medical center will provide 1,722 beds for minimum-security to maximum-security state inmates with acute and chronic medical and mental

health conditions. The estimated cost is \$900.4 million. Construction is expected to be completed by Spring 2013.

LEVEL II FACILITY

The Dewitt Nelson Correctional Facility is a \$188.3 million project proposed to deliver a 684-bed Level II state prison for adult males. The project will have 1,133 beds and require significant infrastructure improvement, including housing, healthcare services, programming, visitation and support services space.

The Estrella Correctional Facility project will be converted to create a 630-bed state prison for Level II adult males. The re-developed facility will provide inmate housing, programming, healthcare and support services for an estimated \$111.4 million. Construction is scheduled for completion by January 2013.

The California Institution for Women (CIW) project will create a 45-bed acute/intermediate mental health care facility at CIW in Chino, including housing, treatment, support and administrative services at the existing women's state prison. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of 2011—the second AB 900 project.

CDCR prison healthcare is currently in federal receivership.

Judge Orders Three-Striker Freed

A judge has ordered the release of Gregory Taylor, a man serving 25 years to life under California's three-strikes law.

Taylor, homeless in 1997, was caught attempting to pry open the doors to the soup kitchen at a downtown Los Angeles church; he told police that he was hungry. In 1984 and 1985, while addicted to crack cocaine and heroin, Mr.

Taylor carried out two robberies to support his habits. No weapons were used and there were no injuries. Judge Peter Espinoza ordered Mr. Taylor's release, saying that the three-strikes law often brings sentences that are "disproportionate" and frequently results in "unanticipated consequences."

Fourteen inmates have been resentenced since law students

of the Three Strikes Project at Stanford Law School began reviewing cases in 2007. Cases are chosen from letters sent by inmates, or from names presented by Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley. According to the national defense advocacy group, the Sentencing Project, 24 states have laws similar to California's three-strikes.



Photo: Lt. Luna

It's a challenge to keep North Block clean

North Block Inmates Trying to Stay Clean

By **WILLIAM CORDOBA**
Journalism Guild Writer

North Block's cleanliness needs the cooperation of its inmate population and staff alike. Last month, the Men's Advisory Counsel (Mac) handed out a flyer asking for everyone's cooperation in upgrading this housing unit's cleanliness. The flyer pointed out specifics that, if put in practice, will result in having a cleaner and healthier living environment for all.

Although cleaning materials are in short supply, North Block porters' performance is above average, most residents agree. They sweep and mop all tiers twice on Second and Third Watch. Trashcans are located on the front and back of each tier, workers collect trash regularly and keep water fountains clean. Also, they mop and disinfect showering areas three times, seven days a week, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. As of

mid-July, the first tier is free of trash and the floor shines.

A few of the 800 inmates spit on the walls and throw trash over the tiers. Basic sanitation and disease prevention requires that to stop.

On the other hand, the solution to the other part of the problem is out of North Block's occupants' reach: The upper and lower catwalks, especially above the officers' station, are covered with dust, trash and bird droppings, and all windows are dusty.

In upcoming weeks, the Vocational Janitorial Services instructor is scheduled to conduct inspections of North Block. Following the inspections, she said, recommendations will be made, if necessary, to bring this housing unit within compliance of cleanliness expectations.

Advocate Aims to Change 3 Strikes

By **ARNULFO GARCIA**
Staff Writer

JULIAN GLENN PADGETT
Managing Editor

Barbara Brooks's son Jeff is imprisoned for life because of non-violent crimes, and she works tirelessly to change the controversial Three Strikes sentencing guidelines.

"Even though my son is in prison, Jeff is the first of our family

to graduate from college, and I am so proud of him," she said.

Barbara Brooks is the publisher of the newsletter Sentencing and Justice Reform Advocacy (SJRA). She attended her son's graduation from Patten University at San Quentin on June 24. He was valedictorian of his class.

"I started the Advocate in 1996, when my son was given a life sentence for a non-violent crime,"

Brooks said. She also wanted to inform the public about Three Strikes law. Brooks began her paper on a shoestring budget and when she was in a corner of the world, all by herself.

"At first I did it for the love of my son," said Brooks. "But I quickly learned that there were many others sentenced under the Three Strikes law for non-violent crimes."

After further study of the Three Strikes law, Brooks said she discovered it was originally designed for violent felons only. "Then came the politics which included any felony," said Brooks.

For further information, visit www.SJRA1.com or write PO Box 71, Olivehurst, CA 95961.



Vernell Crittendon with SQ R.E.A.L. Choices Counselors

Photo: Lt Robinson

Seeking a Free Life

Continued from Page 1

31 other prisons out there and they don't necessarily think and program the way we do here."

Lt. Sam Robinson, San Quentin's Public Information Officer and a graduate of Haven's Court Junior High School, praised the graduating students. He told the graduates, "I see a group of young men here who through difficulties and the challenges of the neighborhoods and the environment that you're in, that you guys are transcending that."

R.E.A.L. Choices has the support of volunteer Steve Fajardo, a Lieutenant for Oakland School District Police. Fajardo said, "I

can see that the [convicts and youth] are learning from each other. I know that the students are bring back the knowledge to the schools and the streets of Oakland."

Luis, a 15-year-old, found out about R.E.A.L. Choices at his

school, but had to apply twice before he was accepted. When he made the commitment to change his life path, R.E.A.L. Choices administrators recognized his seriousness and made space for him in the program.

Tito, 17 years old and a two-year veteran and graduate of R.E.A.L. Choices, remarked, "Gang life and drugs are not the way, [you] can't live your life like that. My life was changed by the men I met here."

Weingarten's Visit to San Quentin

Continued from Page 1

Williams a five-year resident of San Quentin hosted the screening. Williams, whose Dharma name is "Kogen," is the Video Production Assistant of San Quentin Media. Weingarten was impressed. After watching several pieces Weingarten said, "I like this. Some of this is better than the stuff we produce. Can I see more?"

The media project's film screening included "Repentance" and "Q.U.A.K.E. (Quentin United for Aid Kindness and Empathy) for Haiti Relief" and "Brilliance Behind Bars the Rap-u-mentary" directed by Marvin Andrews, also a graduate of the Discovery Channel Film School at San Quentin. When asked about his film Andrews said, "It displays a variety of talents that these men possess here at San Quentin in spite of their life obstacles... also what it's not, is the typical depiction of incarcerated men."

LOST HIS BROTHER

Once the mini-film festival was complete, they were led to a different classroom full of awaiting inmates, volunteers and staff supporters. Inmates began discussing what the self-help programs and the educational opportunities meant to them. Kogen said he felt forced into a lifestyle with gangs at age thirteen. Later in life at the age of 27 he lost his oldest brother.

While he was in county jail Kogen realized that the death and painful loss of his brother made him feel helpless, yet it also led him to a state of deep introspec-

tion. He also realized the pain that he had caused to so many others."

Others in the room began to speak. "I sold a lot of dope to a lot of people and you need to know that," said Michael Harris. "Because when you do a lot *to* people you must do a lot *for* people." Jody Lewen of Patten University Project and a staunch supporter of the education and self-help programs said, "This is the only prison that has a film school, the newspaper, the programs. This place is sort of an incubator."

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

David Cowan, an eight-year resident at San Quentin, said, "What I get out of all the programs as a whole is a sense that I'm being prepared for society. by participating in programs like; Patten University and the San Quentin T.R.U.S.T. (Teaching Responsibility Utilizing Sociological Training), and the Victim Offender Education Group."

Daniel Trevino SAid, "I've learned through my writing that what you write can make a difference in young people's lives."

As dialogue continued more and more people expressed their inner thoughts, tables pushed together and the gathering took on the feeling of a round-table event. David Monroe said, "I've been incarcerated since I was 15 years old. My brother was killed and I stopped going to school. I realized that I had to change things and school helped me."

Darnel Hill, a lifer who has been incarcerated since 1991 and became a resident of San Quen-

tin in 1997, said. "The question is what is the value of education? I ended up coming to prison with my father. As a little kid, I grew up watching my mother get beat by men. It was a dysfunctional environment."

Hill's statement prompted a response from Weingarten: "This is the theme that men in prison don't have fathers. This is the same sentiment that is shared by some of the war veterans and amputees I'm working with on a film project."

"I mentor SQUIRE kids every Saturday," inmate Michael Tyler said. "My best moment was seeing my mother's face when I got my diploma. Patten has given me different tools I can use. Still, finding myself in prison is very hard. I was a kid still trying to learn to be a man."

Arnulfo Garcia reflected on his prison time: "My last stretch in prison I was strung out the whole time. Later I fled to Mexico and I had my daughter. It was the first time I ever thought about changing my life. I just didn't want to be the kind of father who was strung out on drugs with a beautiful daughter."

Lili Polastri of Link TV and a member of the Weingarten party, said, "I'm just surprised at the fact that I didn't realize how unique San Quentin really is. I thought there was a certain amount of rehabilitation being done and there isn't. This is my first time visiting a prison and you men are so different from what people talk about. Is it really possible to help people from here?" Lt. Robinson commented:

"The S.Q.U.I.R.E.S. (San Quentin Utilization Inmate Resources Experiences and Studies) program has a success rate of 70 percent through a series of sessions." That's just one example.

SEVERAL GROUPS

The foundation's name is synonymous with social justice, self-empowerment, higher education and global reform. Moreover, as a world-traveling envoy for social change, Charles Weingarten has funded several human rights organizations such as the Rescue Foundation in India and the B'Tselem's Shooting Back Program in Israel. India's Rescue Foundation supports the rescuing of women from the grips of human trafficking while Israel's Shooting Program provides tools to record mistreatment for victims of human rights violations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. "My job is to try to facilitate help and champion worthy causes," Weingarten said.

"Share What You Know" and "Never Stop Learning," are among his Explorer's group's founding principles. "I didn't come [to San Quentin] with a plan," Weingarten said. But then he added, "What is it that you can do for me? I've always been fascinated with things that have been misunderstood. I think there might be opportunity here to dispel the myths about prison culture."

After the discussion Weingarten was given a tour of the general population facility and as he turned to leave he said, "I would like to come back."

Unsung Heroes of Education

Continued from Page 1

tion. One day during classes Kellum asked his students to visualize Gawain the author, coming to San Quentin to give a lecture to the men.

"It was like mind blowing to my students. They were surprised when she sent her senior assistant to teach my class," Kellum said. "They demonstrated to themselves and to each other the power and force of positive mental visualization."

Her assistant also came in and taught a workshop that was beneficial to the inmates. Kellum stated his job is to help and not just in here.

"If I can help on the outside with contacts I make it a point to have contacts like that assist those in here," he said

Kellum noted that education is the key to human development and that direct experience and indirect experience are the keys to the problems we face in society

"This institution is about positive change. That is why we are in a structured environment," said Kellum. "And our education department is a very important factor in the rehabilitation process of human development."

And as Vice Principal of Robert E. Burton's Adult School of Education, Kellum stays focused on the goals of sharpening the minds of the men instead of tearing them down.

"I have compassion for people and with the incarcerated population I know what kind of environment and educational system they are coming from," said Kellum. "Once they are incarcerated they are separated from the outside influences. Therefore they can focus on their education."

As Vice Principal for five years Kellum said his position is the first line supervisor with the teachers, inmates, office technicians and teaching assistants.

"And having been here for 20 years in the educational system, my responsibility is about human development, the staff, the inmates and myself," Kellum said. "The graduation is an achievement of accomplishment. It's a milestone of a person's life." — Michael R. Harris, Julian Glenn Padgett and Arnulfo T. Garcia.



Photo: Lonnie Morris

Weingarten with Kogen

Valdivia Freed From S.Q.

By PAUL JORDAN
Contributing Writer

After three decades of incarceration Noel Valdivia Sr. left San Quentin a free man on July 8. I met Noey on a beautiful spring day in 2002 as we were running laps on the track. After I passed him for the third or fourth time I said, “It never gets easier, does it?”

Since then I worked with him in the Sheet Metal Shop, participating in numerous groups such as Trust, Impact and college classes. I played baseball with him several seasons, and we lived as “next door” neighbors for several years. His odyssey of incarceration began as a teenager on the hard streets of Stockton, where he fell in with a rough crowd and began experimenting with drugs and alcohol. That led to a murder.

Noey admitted what he did, signed the dotted line for guilty and went to prison for 25 years to life.

One thing about Noey that anyone who knows him will tell you, he was a fierce litigator. He spent much of his free time in the Law Library fighting for his freedom. The Parole Board never found Noey suitable for release, always concluding that he would pose “an unreasonable risk of danger to society” if released. Noey appealed these findings and ultimately had the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals order his release with no parole.

The beauty of Noey as a person and litigator is that he helped others with their appeals. There is a



Photo: Sam Robinson

Noel Valdivia

long list of people he got out. He never said “no” when asked for help. There were guys at his door all day and everyday asking for legal help. Another thing about Noey is that he had this ridiculously inappropriate optimism. Living next door to him I would be laying there late at night and hear him laughing, all the time. I would say to my roommate, “What’s up with that dude?” After all these years of being locked up, no end in sight, enduring decades of oppression, he always laughed. Now that he’s gone I miss the sound of that laughter.

When told there would be only one baseball team this year, thereby excluding dozens of people, he organized a second team. People often refer to Noey’s squad as the “B” team or “second” team, yet in head-to-head competition against the Giants, the B team is up two games on the A team.

Noey is also a family man. He has a son, a daughter and grandchildren whom he loves dearly. The last visit Noey had I recall looking at him sitting next to his 80-something-year-old mother. She was in a wheelchair, holding on for dear life until her son came home, and she had the most beautiful smile. She held on. Noey is home with his family.

OPINION

Thoughts on My Life Among the Lifers

By ELAINE LEEDER
Contributing Writer

As I walk through the iron doors, gates banging behind me, I often feel like I am entering a foreign world.

For the past nine years, I have been running groups for “lifers” at San Quentin State Prison. These are men, sentenced to 15 years to life for first- and second-degree murder or attempted murder, who after spending at least 20 or 30 years behind bars are eligible for parole. There are some 10,000 of them among the 167,000 inmates in the California prison system.

The guys in my group at San Quentin might be called “hardened criminals” and not worthy of parole. My experience has taught me otherwise. These are felons who have gone the extra mile to come to terms with their crimes, who have redeemed their lives and are ready to join society, having worked hard to change their lives.

DIFFERENT INMATES

Yet many have been denied release by the parole board or the governor. They differ from Death Row prisoners, who will die in prison or be executed.

My group, New Leaf on Life, is for lifers who are interested in this kind of self-help program. It is self-selecting and inmate-run. I am the sponsor, along with another private citizen and one prison employee. The room is a



Photo: S. Q. News File photo

Elaine Leeder of New Leaf

classroom where 35 prisoners, the speaker, myself and my co-sponsor run the class. The guards are outside the room and down the hall, should we need them.

That has never happened.

One of my first encounters at San Quentin was with a prisoner named Vinny. I related to him immediately, with his thick Brooklyn accent, his mellow Buddhist ways and the ability to relate to all he encountered. He is a lovely guy, one who is respected by guards and inmates alike. He is in for having permanently disabled a man in a botched robbery attempt in the late 70s while on drugs.

Another inmate in my group is John D. He was an engineer and a respected businessman who killed his wife in 1985 in an argument that got physical. John was recently paroled after 22 years inside, primarily through his own legal efforts.

Another of my guys is Marv, a man who to this day, after more than 30 years, insists that he is innocent. The newest D.A. on this case believes the same. Marv was prosecuted years ago by a D.A.

who did believe Marv was guilty, although there was only circumstantial evidence. Nonetheless he remains incarcerated, now in a medical facility due to small strokes and deteriorating health.

I find this kind of work the most meaningful undertaking I have ever done. I have learned that people can redeem themselves; that they go through many changes when they have been inside so long.

First they might be the thugs that brought them there, but then they mature, they awaken to the crimes that they did, and they then engage in programs in an attempt to change their lives. Later they atone, feeling remorse and taking responsibility for their actions.

MAKES NO SENSE

Men who have gone through this process through multiple programs and self-help activities deserve another chance. Why is it that we do not give them the opportunity they have earned? Why do we spend \$57.92 a day, or \$34 billion a year to keep them locked up, when so many men who have made such visible progress could be paroled?

I know that we live in an anti-crime climate, but this makes no sense to me.

This article appeared previously in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat.

Death Row Inmates and the Public’s Opinion

Continued from Page 1

The U.S. Supreme Court abolished the death penalty in 1972, but reinstated it in 1976. The 1972 decision observed that death sentences were heavily weighted toward the poor and minorities.

California’s death penalty law is the result of Proposition 7, passed in 1978, making it the most comprehensive in the nation.

OVER 45,000 HOMICIDES

Since 1979, there have been more than 45,000 California homicides, according to a report by Paul Comiskey of the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice in San Francisco.

Since 1992, California executed 13 men, beginning with Robert Alton Harris. Five of those executed voluntarily gave up their appeal. Forty-three inmates on Death Row died of natural causes and 16 committed suicide.

As of August 2010 no one is scheduled for execution. Judges must schedule execution dates.

California’s death penalty process costs approximately \$140

million a year for courts, lawyers and the prison system, not including costs associated with trials and federal appeals.

“The Hidden Death Tax: The Secret Costs of Seeking Execution in California” by Natasha Minsker, examined the records from the Controllers Office for compensations made by the state for 10 death penalty trials. It reported compensations ranging from \$1.8 million to \$8.9 million per trial, paid to counties.

Incarcerating the average prisoner costs about \$50,000 annually, but it costs more than \$90,000 for each Death Row prisoner, according to Comiskey’s report. Some 131 people on Death Rows across the nation have been declared innocent and freed. Twelve people convicted of murder in California have been exonerated in recent years.

The notion that the death penalty is a crime deterrent has been discredited, according to decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts. The courts openly acknowledge that the death penalty is racially biased.

Former California Sen. John Burton assisted in creating the California Commission of the Fair Administration of Justice in August 2004. The commission concluded that the California death penalty system is dysfunctional and that a death sentence really amounts to life in prison. Since 1977, only seven prisoners serving life without parole have left prison – only because they were judged innocent.

COSTS 10 TIMES MORE

About 87 percent of first-degree murderers are eligible for the death penalty, according to the commission’s final report.

It typically takes three to five years to bring a death penalty case to trial, costing 10 times more than an ordinary murder case. Only 20 percent of death penalty cases filed result in a judgment of death. The State Public Defenders Office reports that appellate courts overturn 72 percent of those verdicts.

The victim’s family are frequently the determining factor in whether prosecutors seek the death penalty.

Executions have been on hold in California since early 2006, when U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel ruled that the lethal injection method utilized by the prison may be cruel and unusual punishment. Although state prison officials won approval of a newly revised lethal injection procedure in early August, it brought a new lawsuit making the resumption of executions unclear.

The Field Poll has been measuring public opinion toward the death penalty for over 50 years. In each measure, there has been significantly greater support than opposition to the death penalty, although the size of the pluralities in favor has varied. In the period 1956-1971, supporters outnumbered opponents by margins ranging from 12 to 24 percentage points. Support for the death penalty expanded greatly in the late 1970s and continued throughout the decades of the 1980s and 1990s to where supporters outnumbered opponents by margins of five or six to one.

The Field Poll conducted in July found that 70 percent of California voters support the death

penalty as a punishment for first-degree murder. However, if given a choice on what punishment to impose for first-degree murder, 41 percent chose the death penalty, while 42 percent chose life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The lowest percentage in favor of the death penalty was in 1957 with 49 percent in favor, 29 percent opposed and 22 percent had no opinion.

A dramatic shift in opinion began in 1960 when there was a 12 percent change from 22 percent of Californians who had no opinion. Those who had no opinion split evenly between in favor and opposed. This “taking sides” corresponds with the beginning of extreme political polarization in California regarding the death penalty.

The widest margin of disagreement in the poll was in 1985 and 1986 with only two and three percent having no opinion, respectively. During that period, 83 percent of Californians supported the death penalty while 15 and 14 percent opposed it, respectively.

SPORTS

San Quentin Warriors
Off to a Great Start

By **GEORGE LAMB**
Contributing Writer

Editor's Note: George Lamb, aka Coach Carter, is in his fourth season as head coach of the San Quentin basketball team after several seasons as a player.

The 2010 San Quentin Warriors Basketball team is off to what could be its most promising season in the Prison Sports Ministry Program's history. This taller and more-talented lineup than previously seen is off to the best start in several years.

Featuring the most entertaining basketball ever played at San Quentin, the Warriors face the highest level of competition seen in their history.

This team is the best all-around team in my eight seasons with the program, with an impressive record of nine wins and two losses, while averaging 95.7 points per game.

The front line features its own version of the "Big Three." At power forward is Anane "Naa-

Nee" aka "The Big Fella/You are not a guard" Lewis, standing 6-foot-8, averaging 23.0 ppg and 18.9 rpg.

At small forward is R. "Mujahid" aka "Smooth Stroke/They can't guard you on the low block" aka Mr. Inside/Mr. Outside Munns at 6-foot-7, averaging 19.8 ppg and 9.7 rpg.

Center is Daniel "Big Bear" aka "The Big Hurt"/"That's a basketball not a Salmon" Wright at 6-foot-6, averaging 15.4 ppg and 12.1 rpg.

Flanking the Big Three is a tenacious defender in Matthew "Always in Attack Mode" aka "Make a layup please" Carnegie, averaging 15.7 ppg, 9.0 rpg, and 5.4 steals per game, along with the veteran play at point guard of Mike "Y'all should have seen me back in the day" aka "The Mator" Ware averaging 8.2 ppg and 5.0 apg.

The Warriors reserve corps are what Coach Lamb calls his young guns; they play an exciting up-tempo and fast-paced style of

basketball. This supportive cast of men, with its high energy, is crowd pleasers; everyone wants to see them make the most of their opportunities.

They include Delvone "Chic" aka "Air Yicken" Winfrey, averaging 7.6 ppg and 7.9 rpg. Bobby "Bri" aka "It's not as easy as it looks" Jones averaging 9.1 ppg and 2.4 rpg; and is being challenged by Byron "Buddy" aka "Two the hard way" Cheeves averaging 6.6 ppg and 4.6 rpg, for the most improved player since the season opener.

There is also Jermaine "Keeley" aka "Slippery fingers" aka "My bad" aka "They're going the other way" Hall averaging 6.2 ppg and 6.0 T.O'spg.

Last, but not least is James "Big Baby-Baby!" aka "Strike the pose" Bennett averaging 1.8 ppg and 1.0 rpg. He doesn't score much, but when he does, he manages to make it look pretty. He also displays the right attitude whether; in the game or on the sideline and as a result will receive more opportunities to impact the team's success.

This program is spiritually based, with participation, funding, and support from the Bay Area Christian community along with San Quentin. This support base is comprised of one Division II team, one Division III team and three teams from Bay Area men's and Christian Leagues.

Most responsible for the program's successes and overcoming its challenges is General Manager Steve "Big Basket" Irwin. He with Bill E., Shaun H. Miguel R. and others give of their time and other resources in an effort to support our program and our mission to "build men."

With the season spanning 32 weeks and our schedule only filled through the end of August, we anticipate the addition of other Bay Area small colleges and a Pro Am team or two.

Health and
Wellness Corner

The San Quentin News "Health and Wellness Corner" column runs when articles are submitted for publication. A Centerforce health professional will answer questions that you submit about health issues. Feel free to ask us questions about any medical concern that you have, and it may be answered so that everyone can benefit. Put your questions in a U-Save-Em envelope addressed to:

Health and Wellness Corner, Centerforce (Education Dept) – Medical Box. Your name and number will be kept confidential.

In this edition, we will address our mission statement:

The Centerforce mission is to support, educate and advocate for individuals, families and communities impacted by incarceration. Centerforce's founders established the first Visitors' Center in California outside the gates of San Quentin. In 1981, with the help of the late state Assemblyman William Filante, Centerforce drafted legislation that mandated the CDCR to establish visitor's centers outside each adult state prison with an inmate population of more than 800. The California visitors' Centers provide information about prison visiting, transportation to and from public transit terminals, hospitality clothing exchange, social service referrals and activities for children.

Currently, Centerforce provides the following programs:

LIFE (Leaders In Future Environments) – This is a one-on-one mentoring program that aims to support youth who have or have had a parent incarcerated.

HRMF (Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood) – The goal of this program is to strengthen marriages/relationships of incarcerated fathers released from prison. Activities include parenting and relationship classes with fathers inside H-Unit (Back-To-family classes), the couples enhancement workshops (held inside H-Unit visiting) and family reunification case management for families after release from incarceration.

Project START Re-Entry Planning (formerly the Healthy Outcomes, HOP) – This program provides re-entry planning services for men released from San Quentin.

Peer Health Education – Centerforce currently employs five peer health educators to provide health information to other men living at San Quentin. Presentations are given to men entering the institution, in education classes and in some housing areas. Additionally, the peer health educators are available to anyone living at San Quentin at any time to answer question about health issues. This program also provides a five-day training annually to other men interested in providing education to their peers. The current peer health educators are Alfonso Carranza, Darrell Cortez Hartley, Kenyatta Leal, Lonnie Morris and Tung Nguyen.

If you have questions about these programs, contact Dolores Lyles or Julie Lifshay from Centerforce.

The organization's web site is www.Centerforce.org

Life on Parole Has
Its Ups and Downs

Continued from Page 1

tual card in hand. You can't get the Social Security card without first having a driver's license or an I.D. card.

A driver's license will set you back \$31, which you'll have to pay in full. An identification card, on the other hand, will run you \$25 and there are a number of ways by which you can get help paying for it. Your parole agent will give you a voucher for \$19 simply for the asking, making your out-of-pocket cost \$6. You can also get the same voucher from the local office of Health and Human Services (welfare office) or at one of several non-profit organizations such as Proteus or C-SET.

It takes about seven to ten days to get your I.D. card, and another three to six days for the Social Security card. The Social Security card is free – a bargain!

Again, the days when the handy computer printout would get you by are long in the past. A printout from the DMV will not get you a card at the Social Security office. Gotta have the actual I.D. card, with picture, in hand, in order to apply for your Social Security card. So plan on making the local DMV one of your very first stops.

Bus passes are at the discretion of your parole agent, but until such time as the state passes a budget, there are simply not many to be had.

It's economics, folks, money! And there ain't none for anyone these days, and especially for parolees. Not in a state that can't even pass a budget on time.

I'll continue to research and report on what few avenues still remain open to us, as well as any changes as they happen.

Build your parole plans around a determination to succeed. The limited opportunities that remain still exist for the most determined among us.

Nobody ever said that parole would be easy, but I've got two months down now, and 11 more to go until I reach my goal of an early release at 13 months. I'm gonna make it, this I do know, and you can, too.

Blue Ribbon Look
At Justice System

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation that would establish a national commission to evaluate the U.S. justice system regarding sentencing policy, rates of incarceration, law enforcement, crime prevention, substance abuse, corrections and reentry.

The bipartisan commission would establish an organization and proactive approach for studying programs and policies that promote public safety, while reforming those practices that are found to be fundamentally flawed.

With over 7.3 million US adults in prison, jail, parole or probation, the Blue Ribbon commission would conduct an 18-month, comprehensive examination of the criminal justice system and offer substantial recommendations. The sole California congressman introducing the bill was a Republican, Darrell Issa.

LETTERS

Warden Ayers Writes

Former Warden Robert Ayers Jr. revived the San Quentin News two years ago before his retirement. He sent this note after receiving a copy of the June-July issue:

Steve,

Thanks very much for sending the latest edition. It is nice to be remembered! I have to say I am very impressed with the progress of this paper. I think -- thanks to some sound advice -- this paper is printing stories that wouldn't have been thought possible 5 years ago. Everyone on the paper's staff and the Advisory Board should be quite proud.

Best regards,
Bob

Hello San Quentin News

My name is Cynthia White. I am an inmate at Metro State Prison in Atlanta, Georgia. I received the San Quentin News through a friend; I also enjoyed the California Lifers News Letter. I am a lifer with parole; I have done 20

years come August. I just would like to say I share the newsletter in our Lifer Group but it is nothing like what I hear that you guys are doing.

I wish so much that we could come together as you brothers do. I would love to know how to get the Lawrence decision 190 P.3d 548. I am trying to find out if that case can help us in our state.

I just want to say I really enjoy reading the California Newsletter and the San Quentin News, I am happy the brothers are going home. God is good!

Peace, Cynthia White

A Time for Growing

Although locked away and out of the eyes of society, it doesn't mean our minds have to be at a standstill. This is a time to really open our eyes to true ripple affect of our actions. The collateral damage which is ours alone to claim.

This time away that we have should be a time for growing, getting to know ourselves and growing as people, reflecting and

feeling what we've done to hurt so many with our actions. We are the only ones who can change who we are and we have to take responsibility for ourselves!

It's our choices and decisions that bring us to places like this, but we alone can change this. We can be just as productive as society in every aspect. The buck stops with us. We're the ones who are setting the examples for the next generation! We must become the solution to the problem that we helped create. Educating ourselves in every aspect that we can, getting in touch with our inner person and reaching out to those we have hurt whenever possible.

Change comes from within and can't be forced upon nobody! None of us are perfect, we make mistakes all the time, what do you learn from your mistakes to better yourself? It's time to stop being a prisoner within ourselves and be free no matter where we are.

Peace to you all always.
-Michael Jackson

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

POETRY

Snippets

J. K. Rowling—best-selling British author of the popular Harry Potter books—has a personal fortune larger than that of the Queen of England.

Elephants go through six sets of teeth throughout their lifetime. An elephant starves to death once the sixth set of teeth falls out.

Lettuce contains two to ten parts of morphine per billion.

Lucifer is Latin for “light-bringer.”

You can, in fact, get “cooties.” Cooties are lice.

Bamboo is stronger than concrete.

Every year, Arctic terns travel the 25,000-mile round-trip between their breeding grounds in the Arctic circle and the Antarctic.

Two-inch square of Velcro is strong enough to hang a 175-pound man from the ceiling..

Not all bands are doomed to fail after losing their lead singer. The Temptations, Van Halen, and the Grateful Dead are examples.

Subway sandwich shops outnumber actual subway stations in Manhattan.

Last Issue’s
Sudoku Solution

③	4	6	5	7	9	8	2	①
8	⑦	2	3	1	4	9	⑤	6
1	9	⑤	6	2	8	④	7	3
7	3	8	①	5	②	6	4	9
6	5	9	4	⑧	3	7	1	2
2	1	4	⑦	9	⑥	3	8	5
5	8	③	9	4	1	②	6	7
4	⑥	1	2	3	7	5	⑨	8
⑨	2	7	8	6	5	1	3	④

In Indian Country

By DANIEL TREVINO
Journalism Guild Writer

The eagle is a bird that Native people feel is connected to the Great Spirit.

Because the eagle flies the highest of all birds, close to where the Great Spirit dwells, he is regarded as a special messenger to, and from, the Creator. And as such is very sacred to Native people.

Eagle feathers are considered the most sacred of prayer tools, and have been used for centuries for the cleansing of auras, and for healing. The eagle is considered an emissary from the spirit world, so its feathers are sacred pieces of the Great Spirit, and as such are never worn as casual adornment. Eagle medicine represents a state of grace, hard work, understanding and completion of certain tests.

It is by experiencing life’s lows, as well as its highs, and the trial of trusting in the Great Spirit, that have given Native people the right to use eagle feathers for prayer and healing.

Eagle feathers, talons, and bones are protected by the United States government. Laws prohibiting their use are strictly enforced. Native tribes are exempt from these laws, and are free to use eagle talons, bones, and feathers for prayer and healing.

BEING HUMAN
By Naima
of Climbing Poetree

I wonder if the sun debates dawn
some mornings
not wanting to rise
out of bed
from under the down-feather horizon
If the sky grows tired
of being everywhere at once
adapting to the mood
swings of the weather
If the clouds drift off
trying to hold themselves together
make deals with gravity
to loiter a little longer
I wonder if rain is scared
of falling
if it has trouble letting go
If snow flakes get sick
of being perfect all the time
each one trying to be one-of-a-kind
I wonder if stars wish
upon themselves before they die
If they need to teach their young to shine
I wonder if shadows long
to once feel the sun
if they get lost in the shuffle
not knowing where they’re from
I wonder if sunrise and sunset
respect each other
even though they’ve never met
If volcanoes get stressed
If storms have regrets
If compost believes in life after death
I wonder if breath ever thinks
about suicide
I wonder if the wind just
wants to sit
still sometimes

and watch the world pass
by
If smoke was born knowing
how to rise
If rainbows get shy back stage
not sure if their colors
match right
I wonder if lightning sets an alarm clock
to know when to crack
If rivers ever stop and think
of turning back
If streams meet the wrong sea
and their whole lives run off-track
I wonder if the snow wants
to be black
If the soil thinks she’s too dark
If butterflies want to cover
up their marks
If rocks are self-conscious
of their weight
If mountains are insecure of
their strength
I wonder if waves get discouraged
crawling up the sand
only to be pulled back again
to where they began
I wonder if land feels
stepped upon
If sand feels insignificant
If trees need to question
their lovers
to know where they stand
If branches waver in the crossroads
unsure of which way to grow
If the leaves understand
they’re replaceable
and still dance when the wind blows
I wonder where the moon goes
when she is hiding
I want to find her there
and watch the ocean
spin from a distance
listen to her
stir in her sleep
effort give way to existence

Who Am I
By Michael Jackson

What am I but a lost & lonely man,
attempting to make it the best way I can.

Who am I but someone who wants to be normal & sane,
a person who’s struggling desperately to stop all the hurt and pain!

Who am I but someone who unfortunately ended up in prison,
Just another statistic who messed up a life that was God given!

Who am I to hope things will be different from before, I am a man with dreams and love,
waiting to see what God has in store!

Who am I to the man in the mirror who sees exactly what I see
it’s me, the only one who can change my future or destiny.

Who am I but someone struggling with all that I am,
I am someone who takes it day by day doing the best I can!




Book Review

By RANDY MALUENDA



WHY WE LOVE (By Helen Fisher, Ph. D.) -- America’s foremost cultural anthropologist breaks down the physiological roots of romantic love. A quick and fascinating read.



THE QUEST (By Wilbur Smith) -- Latest in Smith’s Ancient Egypt series with lots of action, adventure, period flavorings with a little supernatural stuff. A long, but fascinating read.



33 STRATEGIES OF WAR (by Robert Greene) -- The last of the Greene Trilogy (i.e. Power, Seduction, War), Great add as a reference and resource.



BONK (by Mary Roach) -- Roach’s breezy prose displays the humor in scientific sexual research, past and present, at home and abroad.



A NEW EARTH (by Eckhart Tolle) -- Thoughtful and easy-to-read Tolle calls for a better world through less egotistical practices.

RATINGS:

Top responses are four ribbons progressing downward to one: 

Responses which are two ribbons or less are not recommended reading: 

Sudoku

By ANTHONY LYONS

4	1		3	2		6	5	
		7			4			9
	3	2	7	6			1	8
1		5			2		6	3
	9		5			7		
3		8	6	9		1	2	
8	2			7	3		4	
		4				3		1
7	6			1	5		9	2

Look Who Made It

By JOY C. RICHARDSON
Contributing Writer

Steve Byron was very up front and real about who he was and who he has become.

After 16 years behind the walls, he walked out of the gates of Folsom Prison on Aug. 28, 2006.

About two years into his term, he was seeing himself in the people around him and didn't like what he saw. So he got involved with programs like the Inside Circle and Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired (FPVI) and began looking forward to life on the outside.

A short time after Steve paroled, the Lions Club gave him a motor home to live in. It was falling apart, but he was grateful to have a place to live. Steve picked up bags of food at the local Seventh Day Adventist Church to survive, and was having little luck job hunting.

Peggy from FPVI offered him a part-time job at minimum wage. Eventually that job became full-time with higher wages.

Steve's motor home was becoming worse, so Peggy told him to go find something and she would buy it. Steve paid her back from his work checks.

Here are his comments in a recent interview:



Photo: Joy Richardson

Steve Byron, bride Julie.

How did you learn to transcribe Braille?

While incarcerated at Folsom Prison, I was introduced to the Folsom Project for the Visually Impaired (FPVI) that was established by the Lions Club in 1989. Although I was initially reluctant to participate, I decided in 2003 to take the opportunity and I joined the project. In a few months I became certified in Literary Braille through the Library of Congress.

What's going on in your life today?

Today I am married, have my own business, and own two homes. Although I am not a member, I volunteer at the Seventh Day Adventist Church that helped me. I pick up food from a local food bank and the Wal-Mart warehouse and bring it to the church for their food program.

I also volunteer through the Folsom Braille program to transcribe educational books into Braille for kindergarten through college. This is my second year as president of our local Lions Club. I discharged my parole in 2009, two years early.

What goals are you working towards today?

I am working towards a second Braille certification in Nemeth Math. Once I get my Certificate of Rehabilitation, I want to be able to go into the women's prison in Chowchilla to help get the Braille program started there. I want to make it possible for Women to work out of their home and be with their children. If I can help even one person, I feel like it would go a long way to make up for the wrongs in my past.

Back in the Day

Selected Stories From Back Issues Of The San Quentin News

AUG. 1980 – Two warning shots were fired to break up an altercation between two white inmates on C-Section yard. Meanwhile, in the North Block, seven shots were fired to break up a fight between four white convicts. One con received lacerations to the head and was kept in the hospital overnight for observation. Two received birdshot wounds.

AUG. 1980 – The state Court of Appeal upheld the escape convictions of San Quentin inmates Johnny Spain, Hugo Pinell and David Johnson. The three were convicted for the 1971 escape attempt in which George Jackson was killed. Three guards and two prisoners were killed in San Quentin's adjustment center during the dramatic escape attempt.

AUG. 1980 – The weekend movie is "American Gigolo" starring Richard Gere as the highest paid lover in Beverly Hills. Lauren Hutton plays the senator's wife who falls in love with him.

AUG. 1980 – A group of 47 superior and municipal court judges toured San Quentin following a dinner served in the visiting room. The judges separated into

groups of eight accompanied by a volunteer inmate tour guide.

AUG. 1980 – It was reported that the new \$150,000 X-ray machine which was installed in January is still not fully operational. The machine, which was to have been fully operational in three months, has suffered a series of mechanical problems.

AUG. 1980 – The delivery date for the new \$22,940 dishwasher for the South Block dining hall has been changed once again. The dishwasher, ordered back in April, will be delivered by the end of September.

AUG. 1980 – A story in the S.Q. News touts the benefits of living at S.Q.'s Ranch, including outdoor picnic tables with barbecue pits for visiting, a pool table, fishing, ping-pong, one-two-and three-man rooms and family visiting once every three months.

AUG. 1980 – San Quentin's vocational plumbing shop is designing, building and installing solar panels on the roof of the plumbing shop (NOTE: the panels are still there to this day, 20 years later, although no longer working). The encasements for the 4ft x 10ft panels were made in the sheet metal shop.

AUG. 1980 – Two inmates who escaped the prison one year ago in a homemade boat have been ordered to stand trial. John Waller and William McGirk, both 37, escaped the prison with another man, Forrest Tucker, 59, who is still at large.

AUG. 1980 – Oklahoma's overcrowded prisons are not accepting any more inmates until more space becomes available, possibly next week. The state prison system has exceeded by 123 inmates the limit of 4,410 prisoners set in 1974 by U.S. District Judge Luther Bohanon.

AUG. 1980 – A motorcycle show featuring approximately 100 bikes will be held tomorrow on the lower yard. The show is sponsored by the Modified Motorcycle Association and motorcycle enthusiasts in San Quentin. Entertainment will be provided by Novato Frank, Norton Buffalo and Patrick Hennesy.

AUG. 1980 – Seven shots were fired in order to break up a fistfight between two Mexican-American convicts on the C-Section yard. Three bystanders were injured by birdshot, as well.

AUG. 1980 – Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh will ask the state legislature to approve an early release plan that would free 125 beds in the state's overcrowded prisons. U.S. District Judge James Burns ruled that overcrowding at the state's prisons violates constitutional provisions prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment.

AUG. 1980 – The prison's dental clinic was broken into over the weekend. Among the items taken were 48 hypodermic needles, five cans of zilocane, 15 one-and-a-half inch surgical blades, one gallon of methyl alcohol and 200 silver capsules used for fillings.

News Briefs

San Rafael – San Quentin Death Row inmate Mitchell Sims filed a lawsuit in Marin County Superior Court August 2, alleging, among other claims, that regulators failed to adequately consider other execution methods as an alternative to the three-drug cocktail. The suit was filed in response to the new procedures approved by the Office of Administrative Law on July 30. California's last execution was in 2006.

Sacramento – Selected parole agents in Kern, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Sonoma counties began testing an intense new procedure for parole supervision of 48 parolees, down from the usual 70 offenders. The new policy mandates agents meet with parolees' family members, drug counselors and prospective employers or job-training agencies before and after their release from prison.

Washington, DC – President Obama signed landmark legislation pushing back the 100-to-1 disparity that guides federal sentencing for crack versus powder cocaine. Before, only five grams of crack cocaine (the weight of a few pennies) triggered a mandatory five-year federal prisons sentence versus 500 grams of powder cocaine for the same sentence.

Not Exactly Beach Volleyball, But...

Every Sunday night there is open volleyball on the lower yard. The games are full of laughs and not taken too seriously. All ages and skill levels are invited to attend. Rain or shine.



We Want To Hear From You!

The San Quentin News encourages inmates, free staff, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

- Limit your articles to no more than 350 words.

- Know that articles may be edited for content and length.

- The newspaper is not a medium to file grievances. (For that, use the prison appeals process.) We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.

- Please do not use offensive language in your submissions.

Poems and art work (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.

- Letters to the editor should be short and to the point.

Send Submissions to:
CSP - San Quentin
Education Dept. / SQ News
San Quentin, CA 94964
(No street address required)

San Quentin News

Current and past copies of the San Quentin News are posted online at:

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Visitors/San_Quentin_News/SQ-San_Quentin_News.html

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration, or the inmate population, and should be considered solely the opinion of the individual author unless specified.

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BEHIND THE SCENES

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Correction

In the previous issue of the San Quentin News the officers of the East Block Advisory Council were misstated. Chairman is Dwayne Carry and Vice Chairman is Lemar Barnwell. The News regrets the error.